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FOREIGN NEWS ON CITRUS FRUITS

THE AUSTRALIAN MARKET FOR AMERICAN CITRUS FRUIT

American citrus fruit has displaced similar products imported from other sources into Australia, according to E. M. Lawton, American Consul General at Sydney. Domestic production, however, is expanding rapidly and, with proper storage facilities, may be expected to furnish eventually year round supplies.

Citrus fruit consumption is being stimulated through the activities of the New South Wales Central Citrus Association, an organization modeled after the California Fruit Growers Exchange. Insofar as the Australian product cannot be carried over all seasons of the year, the imported fruit is also benefitting by such activity. California products are received between November and February, some three or four shipments arriving annually. Formerly, Japanese oranges sold freely in Australia at a shilling or two cheaper than California fruit and were thought to be superior to the American product. Imports from Japan, however, have been negligible for the last three or four years, although no good reason is offered for their disappearance.

American sizes most commonly seen are 140's and 150's. Prices paid by importers usually run from \$6.00 to \$7.00 per case, including landing charges and duty. Oranges retail at from 24 to 96 cents per dozen, the highest prices prevailing in November and December, the early summer period, which is also the time of the appearance of California oranges. Prices are lowest in May and June, when the supply always exceeds demand, some fruit being exported to New Zealand.

Both California lemons and Italian lemons are found in Australian markets. The Italian lemons received at Sydney are smaller than the California product. Retail prices vary from 24 to 72 cents per dozen, according to the seasons previously mentioned.

Grapefruit from California average from 12 to 20 cents each or from \$1.40 to \$2.40 per dozen, prices which are generally from 50 to 100 per cent higher than those paid for the domestic product. Grapefruit, as well as oranges and lemons, are inspected upon arrival and if found infected are wholly or partially destroyed. The Sydney citrus market has a taste for quality, resulting from efforts to improve the local output. It is thought that, with improvements in the quality and the marketing of domestic citrus products, California fruit will find a diminishing market in Australia.

